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SUBJECT: IRAN PRESS: AEOI SAYS IRAN WILL PROVIDE TEHRAN RESEARCH
REACTOR FUEL IF AGREEMENTS FAIL

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¶1. (U) On October 10 the Iranian press service ISNA reported comments by AEOI Spokesman Ali Shirzadian on Iran's options for acquiring fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR).

¶2. (U) The ISNA article's title was: "AEOI Spokesman in Talk with ISNA: Various Ways of Procuring Fuel for the Tehran Reactor Are Being Looked At; If They Don't Give 20 Percent [Enriched] Fuel, Iran will Itself Act to Provide Fuel." A loose translation of AEOI spokesman Shirzadian's main comments are as follows:

- [referring to Iran's proposal to provide fuel enriched to 5.3 percent in exchange for 20 percent enriched fuel] This is a practical proposal and it was agreed in the discussions that various ways for providing fuel be looked into.

- The amount of fuel that this reactor needs is 150 to 300 kilograms, depending on its level of operations. This reactor is the main provider of needed medical isotopes in Iran and its [current] fuel is sufficient for a period a little over a year and a half.

- [in stating that Iran's national interests are paramount in the deal to provide fuel for the TRR]: We will decide based on national interests and technological progress, and a technical report for confirmation and final approval will be submitted to Iran's officials after carrying out discussions and investigations.. As such, it is agreed that there will be discussions on how to carry out this work at the October 19 meeting among Iran and several countries to include America, Russia, France and the IAEA.

- [Question: Why couldn't Iran buy twenty percent enriched fuel as it did 16 years ago from Argentina]: One of the proposals was providing 5.3 percent enriched fuel and receiving 20 percent enriched fuel.. Iran has complete enrichment technology at its disposal and as such will sit at the negotiating table with a full hand and with power.

- [Question: What will Iran do if, for whatever reason in the future, the probable contract to provide fuel for TCC is cancelled, like other contracts that up until now these countries have had with Iran which have cancelled or postponed?]: At that time we will write a letter and announce to the IAEA that Iran will itself act to provide fuel for the Tehran Reactor.

- From an economic viewpoint it is most economical for us to purchase the TRR fuel from one place instead of acting to set up a production line to change five percent enriched uranium to provide 20 percent enriched uranium for 200 kilograms. For this reason we told the IAEA that we need this much fuel and the IAEA Director General carried out some actions in this regard.

- Iran is an IAEA member and the IAEA is present in the discussions relating to providing fuel for the TCC, and this is a guarantee for the implementation of a probable fuel agreement. The question of how much ability the IAEA has to defend agreements reached under this international agency's framework and guarantee their implementation goes back to the Agency itself. If tomorrow or one day America wants to create problems with such an agreement it is not a matter for Iran and the IAEA, but relates to America and the IAEA.

- We enter these negotiations as a technical organization and pursue dialogue. If an agreement is formed and for any reason isn't implemented the stain is on the reputation of the IAEA and

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the countries scuttling the agreement.

- [Question: if the agreement isn't implemented, will Iran itself produce the 20 percent enriched fuel for the TCC]: As I said earlier, [in this instance] we ourselves would act [i.e. provide the fuel], of course this action of Iran's would be under the supervision of the IAEA.

- [Question: what guarantee exists that the IAEA itself will live up to its agreements in that in relation to the modalities of settling up the remaining issues with Iran it has not acted according to its obligations]:

Most of the IAEA's members agree that Iran's activities are peaceful and legal and that Iran has always cooperated with the IAEA, and the chance of exercising severe political pressure on Iran and on its cooperation in the future with the Agency is very slight. At the same time we are not as pessimistic as you and we interact with good intentions, while from the technical viewpoint we are empowered.

Definitely their positive steps will have a positive influence on wide future cooperation between the western world and developing countries, because these countries see the Islamic Republic of Iran as a defender of their nuclear rights who has taken a stand opposing imposition of conditions outside of international norms and has insisted on achieving its explicit rights.

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